

Floyd and Todd Wright Builders, Main Street Properties of East Jordan LLC, the City of East Jordan, and Presley Architecture for the Rehabilitation of the Votruba Grocery and Porter Lumber Company Buildings

Constructed at the turn of the twentieth century, the Votruba Grocery and Porter Lumber Company Buildings constitute a unified, highly visible and historically significant portion of East Jordan's business district. Originally built as a grocery and a company dry good store/office respectively, these buildings were in many ways the heart of the then-booming lumbering town. J. Votruba, a local merchant, constructed his grocery on the street level and included a large second floor recreation space that he made available to family and friends. The space also served as the meeting room for the local Knights of Pythias. The Porter Building, constructed for local lumberman W. P. Porter, originally served as the company store and business offices for the East Jordan Lumber Company. It later housed the local 5 and 10 store and a collection of medical and dental offices. The Masonic and Eastern Star lodges also met in the rear of the second floor. The Porter Lumber Company building served the community into the 1970s when its last retail tenant closed. The Votruba Building was occupied through the late 1990s by a variety of commercial and retail businesses including a hardware store, furniture store, and eatery.

Concerned about the future of these critical downtown buildings, the city of East Jordan began investigating redevelopment tools and incentives that would help market the buildings as investment opportunities. By discovering a variety of funding sources that would be available, including the federal historic preservation tax credits, and identifying a forward thinking developer, the city created a situation capable of producing great change.

The city of East Jordan and Main Street Properties of East Jordan LLC, led by Floyd Wright, supported by the Charlevoix State Bank, and assisted by architect Greg Presley of Northville, planned and carried out the rehabilitation, thus creating new downtown commercial opportunities. The buildings now house six commercial operations, the Chamber of Commerce, and a branch bank. Since it reopened the structure has had a 90 percent occupancy rate. This project clearly demonstrates that rehabilitation is a highly viable redevelopment tool in any size community that recognizes the potential and value of its historic resources.



Before



After

Historic Preservation in Michigan

